

**DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY  
DELTA LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFP #**

**Issued: April 11, 2013**

**Submission Deadline: 5:00p.m. CST on June 10, 2013**

**Bidders' Meeting: July 9, 2013**

**Deadline for final submission of questions: June 3, 2013**

*Questions: Questions can be submitted prior to the Bidders' Meeting; however, no answers will be provided and/or circulated prior to that date.*

ALL QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS RFP MUST BE SUBMITTED BY: June 3, 2013

No interpretation of the meaning of the Bid Documents will be made to any bidder.

Questions may be submitted, in written form, to:

Bevin Hunter

Delta Regional Authority

2801 S. University Avenue, Rm 472

Reynolds College of Business

Little Rock, AR 72204

Or emailed to: [bhunter@dra.gov](mailto:bhunter@dra.gov)

Questions will be answered by Ms. Hunter only within two (2) business days via email with a return reply acknowledging receipt of the email requested. Questions and replies will also be posted at [www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov)

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## **Section 10**

### **Introduction**

The mission of the Delta Leadership Institute (“DLI”) is to recognize, train, and develop in its participants in the eight-state region the leadership skills needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in order to face the global challenges of the future. The Delta Regional Authority (“DRA” or “the Authority”) Board has initiated various programs to help the residents of the Delta reach these goals. One of the priorities of the DRA is to improve the leadership skills of the region’s current and future leaders. The DLI is the vehicle through which the DRA will pursue these efforts. The result obtained from the implementation of the DLI programs will be the creation of a cadre of leaders that will work for future improvements in the region by “thinking and acting regionally.”

This Request for Proposals (“RFP”) solicits from institutions of higher education (“institutions”) within the Delta region to work in partnership with the DRA to create a nationally recognized DLI that will prepare state and local leaders to be catalysts for change in the Delta. DLI will include but not be limited to:

- A year-long executive academy (“Executive Academy”) aimed at key leaders from the public, non-profit, and private sectors, which will focus on regional leadership with sessions located in the region; and
- An active alumni program known as the Delta Leadership Network (“DLN”) to encourage ongoing networking and collective action.

The purpose of this RFP is to expand and build upon DLI. DRA has previously held eight years of the DLI Executive Academy program. The focus of the Executive Academy is on regional leadership and topics important to DRA and the region such as health, information technology, small business, bio-economy, transportation, and education. DRA will require the institution to secure prominent speakers on subject matters vital to the region at each of the sessions to be held in the DRA region and Washington, DC, where the participants of DLI will be exposed to issues and cultural history in each of the cities where the sessions are held. A cultural outing or business excursion must also be provided at every location. Upon the completion of the Executive Academy, the participants should possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make a direct impact in their community, county/parish, and state.

Additionally, DRA will expect the institution to continually maintain active contact and work with the alumni of the Executive Academy through the DLN. DRA deems the DLN as one of the most important aspects of the program, and as such, a greater emphasis will be placed on DLN and how alumni can be activists for DRA and its programs.

DRA is soliciting competitive proposals because it has determined that this process best serves the needs and interest of DRA and the public. As such, all proposals will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals in response to the RFP, and no institution or person shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, citizenship status, national origin, ancestry,

gender, sexual orientation, age, weight, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran status, political affiliation, or any other factor protected by law in consideration for an award issued pursuant to this RFP. DRA is committed to the principles of equal opportunity and the elimination of all vestiges of discriminatory practices that might exist.

DRA encourages responders to think to bring forth innovative ideas that will train local leadership through substantive exercises and learning modules and empower DLI participants to take action towards positively impacting the future of the Delta with collaborative solutions to our region's greatest challenges.

## **Background**

### **The Delta Regional Authority**

DRA was created by Congress by the *Delta Regional Authority Act of 2000*, as amended, as a federal/state partnership comprised of 252 counties and parishes within the eight states of Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. DRA is designed to remedy severe and chronic economic distress by stimulating economic development and fostering partnerships that will have a positive impact on the region's economy by improving the health of our citizens, training a competitive workforce, investing in 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure, and supporting our small businesses and entrepreneurs. The Authority's enabling legislation can be found in the *Delta Regional Authority Act of 2000*, as amended, located under "DRA's Statute" on [www.dra.gov](http://www.dra.gov).

### **The Authority's Board of Directors**

The powers of the Authority are vested in the nine members of its board ("the board"):

- Eight state governors or their designees and alternates, one of whom serves as the state co-chairman; and
- One federal co-chairman appointed by the president of the United States, with the advice and consent of the Senate.

### **The Delta Leadership Institute**

DLI will focus on promoting action-oriented leadership in the Delta region. Key objectives include, but are not limited to:

- Instilling in leaders the importance of regional action across jurisdictional boundaries, be they municipal, county, or state lines;
- Building awareness of DRA priorities in key areas such as education, bio-economy, transportation, technology, small business and entrepreneurship, and healthcare;

- Ensuring that those participating in the Executive Academy leave with a body of leadership knowledge and skills that can be applied for community and regional action ;
- Developing a strong network of leaders who can work together across the region;
- Promoting action that will make a difference in the region;
- Case studies during the sessions that pertain to both the best and worst of the region that can be replicated and avoided in their own communities; and
- Issuance of certificates to participants acknowledging and commending completion of DLI; and each participant must receive at least two certificate trainings per year that will contribute to a participants' expertise and can serve as professional continuing education.

## **Section 20     Roles of the Institution of Higher Education & Delta Regional Authority**

Key roles and responsibilities of responding institutions will include but not be limited to:

- Work with DRA to help guide the work of the institution;
- Develop a marketing plan and related materials to promote the initiative throughout the region;
- When available during sessions, use the resources of universities and colleges in the area by bringing them in as a partner;
- Publicly promote the program in the DRA region as approved by DRA;
- Design and deliver Executive Academy curriculum, subject to approval by DRA;
- Maintain and expand the DLN, subject to approval by DRA;
- Seek and incorporate program feedback from participants as well as DRA;
- Provide briefings to the DRA board, staff, and other interested parties, as requested;
- Notify DRA concerning any organizational changes, including significant personnel providing the leadership development programming for DRA;
- Provide quarterly reports to DRA staff on 1/15, 4/15, 8/15, 12/15 for each year of the program until it is closed out; and
- Provide adequate support and accommodate DRA staff members during audits and management assistance visits and coordinate visits to the institution's premises.

Key roles and responsibilities of the DRA will include but not be limited to:

- Provide and fund a part-time DRA staff member as an on-site program director whose job duties will include but not be limited to:
  - Assist with scheduling to ensure that session dates align with the DRA calendar;
  - Give the final decisions on hotel selection to be at the government rate;
  - Accept applications to the Executive Academy and distribute those applications to DRA Board members and Federal Co-Chairman for selection;
  - Assist with the Washington session, including arrangement of sessions with federal partners and others, as needed;
  - Coordinate with the DRA Board should members desire to attend any sessions during the year; and
  - Attend sessions to oversee progress and deal with details as they may arise during the sessions as related to DRA.
- Assist in securing speakers for initiative events;
- Expand upon and maintain the current website for the Executive Academy and the DLN;
- Provide feedback and guidance on program design and related issues; and
- Provide ongoing funding support, subject to satisfactory performance, under any contract resulting from this RFP.

## **Section 30                      The Request for Proposals**

### **Submission Requirements**

The proposal narrative should provide the following information:

1. **Program Strategy:** The proposal should describe the institution's strategy for promoting action-oriented leadership in the Delta region, to include, but not be limited to, the following major components under the DLI umbrella:
  - An Executive Academy aimed at key leaders from the public, non-profit, and private sectors;
  - Case study work that reflects both the best and worst examples in the region;

- Proposed areas of certifications of training in leadership, such as “Crucial Conversations” and “The Influencer”; and
- An active alumni program (DLN) to encourage ongoing networking and action.

The narrative should include discussion of marketing strategies, instructional methods, and linkages between the various program components. Innovative approaches are expected and will be required.

2. **Experience and Expertise:** The proposal should describe the institution’s experience in designing and delivering leadership development programming. The qualifications of staff/faculty that will be involved in program design and delivery shall also be provided.
3. **Facilities:** The proposal should describe the facilities available to host the DLI, including facilities for the proposed Executive Academy. Meetings not held in facilities owned by institution around the region are the responsibility of the institution to obtain, subject to written approval by DRA.
4. **Budget/Funding:** The proposal should present a budget for each major component of the initiative, including a breakdown of costs for instructional personnel, materials, facilities, meals, and transportation to any off-site activities. The proposal should address any plans the institution has to leverage the contribution from DRA, as needed to cover basic program costs or to expand initiative programming beyond the basics. An additional commitment of 10% of the total funding budget for the first year should be included in the proposed budget and can include commitments for contributions from the institution or outside sources.
5. **Scholarship:** The proposal should include scholarships for each of the 50 Executive Academy participants. This should include lodging (provided by the institution during the session at government rate if possible), mileage (standard government rate from their home to and from the meeting), and meals (provided by the institution during the meeting) for each meeting up to \$6,000 maximum per person for the curriculum year. The institution is responsible for the reimbursement procedures of any and all travel (mileage, lodging, meals) to each participant. Therefore, the institution should have an established and effective reimbursement procedure.
6. **Expansion of and improvements to DLI:** In light of the programs existence for the previous eight years, the proposal should expand upon ideas the institution has to improve DLI and move this program to the next level.
  - Specifically, sustaining the curriculum, developing new and innovative ideas;
  - Collaborating with other universities and colleges in the region during the year to expand upon the program; and

- Designing a program that offers the participant continuing education credits or certification.

The board desires to minimize submission of superfluous RFP material. Therefore, responding institutions are instructed to organize their responses according to the following format:

- The proposal narrative should not exceed 12 typewritten pages tabbed by category. Font must be Times New Roman and can be no smaller than 10 typeset. Two (2) pages per section as follows:

Pages 1-2: Program Strategy

Pages 3-4: Experience and Expertise

Pages 5-6: Facilities

Pages 7-8: Budget/Funding

Pages 9-10: Scholarships

Pages 11-12: Expansion of and improvements to DLI

- Supplemental information or background material, if any, must be restricted to appendices following the narrative placed in chapters. Up to additional ten (10) pages per chapter of supplemental material may be submitted, including curriculum vitae of key personnel, marketing materials from prior leadership development programs, and agendas or curriculum materials from prior leadership development programs.
- Pages should be numbered consecutively and identify the institution on each.
- Each proposal should be accompanied by a title page specifying the name of the RFP being responded to (“Delta Leadership Institute”) followed by a submittal letter signed by an officer of the responding institution.

## **Section 40                      Submission Procedures**

**The deadline for submissions in response to this RFP is 5:00 p.m. CST, June 10, 2013.**

Please submit six (6) copies of your sealed response in the same package (shipping box or envelope) clearly marked on the outside “Response to RFP for Delta Leadership Institute” addressed to:



Bevin Hunter

Delta Regional Authority

2801 S. University Avenue, Rm 472

Reynolds College of Business

Little Rock, AR 72204

Each institution must submit a complete response (answer every information request) to this RFP, as failure to do so will result in immediate disqualification, and cause the response to not be scored. Further, the response must be signed by an officer of the responding institution, and the response must include a statement as to the period for which the response remains valid, which must be at least 90 days from the date responses to the RFP are due.

Additionally:

- Telephone, fax, or e-mail responses will not be accepted for this RFP;
- Responses or unsolicited amendments will not be accepted after the closing date and time;
- Requests for time extensions past any deadlines will not be considered; and
- Mailed responses should allow adequate time to assure timely arrival.

## **SECTION 50            The Review and Evaluation Process**

The Authority's selection committee ("the Committee") will review and evaluate only the responses that meet the following threshold items:

- The institution's willingness to explicitly follow the Authority's guidelines in this RFP;
- The experience and qualifications of both the institution and its staff to be assigned to provide these services, in regard to its described ability to successfully manage the DLI;
- Involvement and accessibility of the institution's staff to be assigned to these services;
- The institution's commitment to the Delta region;
- The institution's location within the DRA eight-state region; and
- The institution's answers to the information requests outlined in "submission requirements" above.

Subsequent to the Committee's evaluation, and at the sole discretion of the Committee, certain institutions may be selected to make oral presentations to the DRA board on July 9, 2013. Those institutions so selected will be given not less than seven business days' notice, along with the date, time, and place for these presentations.

Each institution selected for an interview will be allotted 30 minutes for its presentation, yet additional time may be allotted by the full board to answer any questions it may pose, to ensure the institutions are evaluated on the basis of the criteria set forth in this RFP.

The DRA Board may then select the institution based on the demonstrated competence, experience, knowledge, and qualifications of the institution, as evaluated and proffered by the committee.

The Board fully reserves the right to make this decision and the Board's decision on this matter is final.

## **SECTION 60                                      RFP Terms and Conditions**

This RFP is for the purpose of soliciting responses from institutions of higher education qualified to design and deliver a leadership initiative, on a region wide basis, for the Authority.

No claim for adjustment of any provision of the RFP shall be honored after the proposal has been submitted on the grounds that the proposer was not fully informed as the existing conditions or circumstances or any other related matter. However, by this RFP, the Board has not committed itself to employ an institution for these services for any or all of the herein-described matters and the board reserves the right to decide such after receipt, review and evaluation of all responses.

Additionally, the Board reserves the right to:

- Waive or amend any portion of this RFP by written notice to all institutions;
- Negotiate all elements that comprise the information with the institution(s) to ensure that the best possible considerations are afforded to all concerned;
- To waive any irregularities;
- Reject any and all responses to this RFP;
- Select institution(s) for specific purposes or for any combination of specific purposes; and
- Defer the selection of any institution(s) to a time of the Authority's choosing.

Additionally, the Board will allow and review responses utilizing joint ventures of any two or more institutions, or sub-contractors by a single institution, as long as the response clearly:

- Identifies the lead principal who will bear the responsibility for the contract for services with the Authority; and
- Describes its proposed measures of quality control for itself and its joint-venture partners and/or its sub-contractors sufficiently to satisfy the board.

### **Warranty and Independence**

Institutions must warrant that no sums or anything of value has been or will be paid directly or indirectly to any officer or employee of DRA such as wages, compensation, or gifts in exchange for acting as officer, agent, employee, subcontractor, or consultant to the institutions in connection with any work compensated or performed.

DRA cannot and does not make any representations or warranties with regard to the information, data, documentation, and material conveyed in this RFP or otherwise provided by DRA. Institutions shall conduct their own independent investigations and analysis and make their own assessments, judgments, and decisions regarding this opportunity.

### **Board and Staff Communication**

Under no circumstances shall any entity intending to respond to this RFP contact any member of the board or DRA staff, except for Bevin Hunter, the contact person, during this RFP process. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in immediate disqualification.

### **Period of Contract**

While the contract will be offered for a term of one year, with a renewal option for two one-year terms subject to DRA approval, it is the intent to continue the contract on an ongoing basis, contingent upon, among other things, availability of funds, continued need, and satisfactory performance of services. At all times, the institution will serve at the will and pleasure of the Authority.

### **Cost of Developing and Submitting Response**

DRA shall not, under any circumstances, be liable or responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by any institution in preparing and/or submitting a response associated with proposals including, but not limited to, research, investigation, development, preparation, duplication, production, collation, packaging, delivery, transmittal, or presentation of proposals or any related information, data documentation, and material. All costs and expenses incurred by the proposers in connection with these proposals submitted shall be the sole responsibility of the proposers.

### **Acceptance of RFP Content**

Some of the contents of this RFP and the response submitted may be incorporated by reference in any final contract resulting from this RFP.

**Facilities**

The Board and DRA personnel reserve the right to inspect each institution's facilities at any time without prior notice.

**Assignment and Delegation**

Any contract issued pursuant to this RFP is not assignable, nor may be delegated, except with the prior written approval of the board.

**Property**

All responses become the property of the DRA upon receipt and will not be returned to the institutions once opened. The DRA has the right to use any and all ideas or adaptations of the ideas contained in any response received in this RFP. Selection or rejection of the response will not affect this right.

**Proprietary Information**

If an institution does not desire certain proprietary information in its response disclosed, the institution is required to identify all proprietary information in the response, which identification shall be submitted concurrently with the response. If the institution fails to identify proprietary information, it agrees by submission of its response that all parts of all responses shall be deemed non-proprietary and will become public documents upon completion of the RFP process.

**Governing Law**

The contract created as a result of this RFP and the accepted response will be made under, and shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Mississippi.